

New Covenant Christian School

Student Athlete Guidelines / Handbook

Table of Contents

I. Statements of School and Athletic Department Mission	2
II. Student-Athlete Handbook	
A. Introduction	2
B. Goals of Athletic Participation	3
C. Governance	4
D. Requirements for Participation	4
E. Athletic Codes of Conduct	5
F. Scholastic Athletic Eligibility Requirements	6
III. General PIAA Eligibility Rules.....	7
Acknowledgement Form	9

I. Statements of School and Athletic Department Mission

- **Statement of New Covenant Christian School Mission:**
New Covenant Christian School exists to glorify God by partnering with families and churches to provide a quality education in a Christ-centered environment, and to prepare each learner for a life of following Jesus and serving in and through the kingdom of God.
- **Statement of New Covenant Department of Athletics Mission:**
As a component of the New Covenant Christian School mission, the Athletic Department promotes team interscholastic athletic competition, offered up as an expression of worship to God, to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. The relationships developed at New Covenant on athletic teams demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through integrity, servant hood, teamwork and excellence.

Athletic Department Core Values

- Every student athlete was created by God with great dignity and with His purposes in mind.
- The spiritual and physical well-being of every athlete is our highest priority.
- Our New Covenant athletic teams will model Jesus' example of serving.
- Student athletes at New Covenant will be encouraged to honor and glorify God in all they do.
- We recognize that athletic participation is inherently educational and must never exceed the importance of classroom education. Athletics provides valuable life lessons in Christian citizenship, teamwork, excellence, hard work, perseverance, personal and social responsibility, and overcoming adversity.
- Interscholastic athletics at New Covenant open doors of opportunity to impact and influence the world for Christ.

II. Student-Athlete Handbook

A. Introduction

1. To the Parent

This material is presented to you because your son or daughter has indicated a desire to participate in interscholastic athletics at New Covenant Christian School. We are pleased that you have expressed willingness to permit your child to compete. Your parental interest is an important component of our school program. We are excited to partner with you through sports.

Interscholastic team athletics at New Covenant are designed to enhance the mission of New Covenant by creating wonderful opportunities for fulfillment through Christian relationships, personal spiritual growth, and attainment of team and individual athletic goals. Spiritual, physical, social, and mental growth results from involvement in athletics at New Covenant. It is our intent to conduct a program that is spiritually and educationally sound in purpose and will positively enhance our students' personal experiences while at New Covenant. We will provide the most qualified and well-trained coaches available for each sport who will be mentors for our students. We also seek to provide adequate equipment and facilities necessary for excellence in the athletic program at New Covenant. Coaches are required to have a background check and clearances and complete an application.

A student who elects to participate in interscholastic athletics is voluntarily forfeiting their will for the self-discipline that will be required for the good of his or her team. The student athlete must bring his or her mind and body under discipline required to withstand rigorous competition. In striving for excellence in Christ on the athletic court, field or track, your son or daughter will be accepting a challenge to commit to the team and the responsibilities and obligations that go with that commitment. We would like to help you get acquainted with specific policies that are necessary for a well-organized program of athletics. It is the role of the Athletic Department to establish athletic policies that will preside over the spirit of competition at New Covenant. These policies need a broad base of community support at New Covenant, which is

achieved only through open lines of communication to our parents. It is our hope that we will accomplish this goal, in part, through this Student Athlete Handbook for athletes and their parents.

2. To the Athlete

Being a member of an athletic team is a goal of many young people. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight. It takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic team at New Covenant, you have inherited a wonderful tradition which you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been to play with integrity, win or lose. This honor carries over to all our athletes, our school, our fans, our families, and our communities. Such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned. Over the years, our squads have achieved league and tournament championships and set school records.

When you wear the colors of New Covenant, we assume that you not only understand our traditions, but are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them. However, the contributions you make should be a satisfying accomplishment for you, your family, and your school.

a. Responsibility to God: God tells us in His Word that ‘whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him’ (Colossians 3:17 NIV).

b. Responsibility to Yourself: One important responsibility is to allow God to grow you in character and love for others. Through your athletic experiences, you will receive great benefits for use all throughout your life time.

c. Responsibility to Your School: Another responsibility you assume as a team member is to your school. You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic team at New Covenant. The student body, the New Covenant community, and other local towns and communities evaluate our school by your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field. As a result of this leadership role, you can contribute significantly to school spirit and community pride.

d. Responsibilities to Others: As a team member you carry a big responsibility to the younger students at New Covenant. They are watching you. It is important for you to set good examples for them.

B. Goals of Athletic Participation

Statement of Goals

- To bring honor and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ through interscholastic athletics.
- To always strive for excellence on and off the field/court of play exhibiting godly sportsmanship.
- To ensure growth and development that will increase the number of participants and stimulate increased contest attendance.
- To provide an opportunity for students to experience success in the sports he or she selects.
- To provide a broad range of sport teams in keeping with the wide variety of student athlete interests and abilities.
- To provide opportunities that nurture the following:
 1. Spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional growth and development in Christ.
 2. Acquisition and development of special skills in activities of each student’s choice.
 3. Develop value of commitments such as loyalty, cooperation, and fair play.
 4. Directed leadership and supervision that stresses discipline, motivation, excellence, and ideals of good sportsmanship.
 5. A focus of interests on athletic teams for our student body, faculty and staff, and community that will generate a sense of unity in the body of Christ.

6. Working with others in reaching team goals through self-discipline, respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice.
7. Practicing and competing for excellence with earnest dedication.
8. Enjoyment of athletics and athletic participation, acknowledging that all success is a gift from God and is designed to bring Him honor and glory.
9. Development of desirable personal health habits in obtaining a high degree of physical fitness.

C. Governance

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)

New Covenant Christian School is a member of the PIAA and competes with other PIAA member schools. As a member school, New Covenant and the Department of Athletics agree to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations established by the PIAA.

The primary role of the PIAA is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for student-athletes and a balance in educational programs. The PIAA solicits input and is responsive to requests for rules modification from member schools, districts throughout the state, appointed committees, and athletic director associations. The PIAA attempts to enforce such rules that assure the greatest good for its member schools and to ensure that competition is conducted in an appropriate manner.

D. Requirements for Participation

- **Comprehensive Physical Examination**

A yearly physical examination is required. The PIAA physical forms must be completed by a licensed physician and your parents and submitted to the Athletic Director prior to participation. The examination covers all sports for the entire school year provided it was administered after June 1. The forms will be kept on file in the office.

- **Emergency Medical Authorization**

Each athlete's parents shall complete an Emergency Medical Authorization Form giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parent(s) are not available. The form will be kept with the head coach at all times, and a copy will be kept in the athletic office. If emergency medical care is ever needed for the student, the form will be sent along to the hospital with the student to give hospital staff permission to provide medical care for the injured athlete.

- **Student Athlete Athletic Policies Agreement Form**

Any time a student decides to participate on an athletic team, he/she will be presented with this handbook containing all the necessary forms and information for participating in athletics. Each parent or guardian and athlete should read all of the enclosed material and certify that they understand the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the Athletic Department of New Covenant Christian School. This signed document will be filed in the school office.

- **Insurance.** New Covenant does not carry insurance to cover student athletic injuries. Every year, parents of athletes complete page 1 of the PIAA physical exam forms stating their family insurance coverage information to the Athletic Director or coach. This is used by the Athletic Director as proof that the student has medical insurance coverage under his/her family medical plan in case of athletic injury at New Covenant. In the event of emergency where the parent was not available, the athlete's family medical insurance coverage information would be given to the hospital by the New Covenant coach along with the student's emergency medical authorization so that the athlete could receive emergency medical care.

- **Scholastic Eligibility.** In order to participate on a New Covenant athletic team, each athlete must have satisfied the scholastic eligibility requirements of New Covenant and the PIAA prior to participation. (See F. Scholastic Athletic Eligibility Requirements, on page 6)

- **Uniforms and Equipment.** In New Covenant sports, athletes borrow their game uniform from the Athletic Department during their particular sports season. All athletes are responsible for the proper care and security for their uniform and equipment throughout the season. Game uniforms which are furnished by the Athletic Department are to be worn only for games. Any student athlete who does not turn in his/her uniform and school-supplied equipment at the end of the season will be charged current full replacement costs. If the uniform was taken care of negligently and damage was

done (beyond normal wear and tear), the athlete will pay full costs to the school to purchase a replacement. At the end of the season, the student should return all uniform parts and school equipment to the head coach.

E. Athletic Codes of Conduct

A firm but fair policy for conduct is implemented in order to uphold the mission of New Covenant and the Athletic Department. Following our core values in athletics, the Athletic Director, the New Covenant Association, school administrators, and the coaching staff feel strongly that high standards of Christian conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound program of athletics. All athletes shall abide by a code of ethics for athletic participation. Any conduct that results in dishonor to the athlete, the team, or the school, tarnishes the reputation of everyone associated with the athletic program and will not be tolerated.

General Athletic Disciplinary Procedures

- All players are expected to attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach of the sport.
- Athletes of any age who exhibit unacceptable conduct in or out of school or competition (namely the buying, selling, possession, or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or steroids; fighting, threatening, stealing, lying, possessing false identification, forgery, cheating, vandalizing, violating school rules of conduct, carrying a dangerous or concealed weapon, being charged with or committing a felony, trouble with the police, or other unacceptable conduct) will be suspended from interscholastic competition. Disciplinary measures will be determined by the school principal in accordance with the formal suspension and/or expulsion policy of New Covenant.
- Any athlete who commits any of these violations will be suspended immediately from athletic participation and may be suspended up to one complete season or more.
- Unexcused cuts from class or leaving class early without permission on any given day during an athlete's season will result in a one (1) game suspension from the next game.
- Any athlete making an obscene gesture during practice or competition or use of obscene language in a practice or game will result in a one (1) game suspension from the next scheduled contest. Any subsequent use of obscenity in the form of words or gestures in a practice or game will result in another one (1) game suspension.
- Any New Covenant student, athlete or not, who seeks to belittle, harass or disrespect an official or a player or fan from another school, shall be removed from the premises during the athletic competition. The high school Principal will be informed so that disciplinary measures can be taken by the Principal. The Principal and Athletic Director reserve the right to *not* permit the student to attend one (1) or more or all remaining games in that season.
- If a student serves detention on a practice day and is late for practice, the coach may decide not to give participation privileges to the athlete on that day.
- Any student athlete serving an "in school" or "out of school" suspension is ineligible for practices and games during the length of the suspension. Students may not attend sporting events during suspension.
- All athletes must abide by the cell phone, tattoo, and body piercing policies described in the Student Handbook of New Covenant Christian School. Student tattoos must be covered with a sleeve or bandage. Any student in violation of any of these policies shall be subject to the disciplinary measures as written in the policy.
- All athletes must remove all jewelry prior to sports practices and athletic competition.

Practice Dress Code

- Every athlete will dress in clothing consistent with New Covenant dress code to include appropriate game-length shorts and t-shirts. Sleeveless shirts must be cut like the game jerseys; loosely cut arm holes are not acceptable.
- Modesty on behalf of all athletes is expected and appreciated. Coaches reserve the right to send students home if inappropriate.

Game Day In-School Dress Code

- Home games will be uniform jersey tops worn. Sleeveless tops require a t-shirt worn underneath during the school day.
- Away games require nice jeans with shirts and ties for boys, dress shirts/blouses for girls, or away jerseys – to be determined by coach.

F. Scholastic Athletic Eligibility Requirements

New Covenant Christian School seeks to provide a top quality Christian education to its students in the classroom environment. Athletics at New Covenant is considered a privilege. All student athletes participating in interscholastic athletics at New Covenant are required to meet the academic standards established by New Covenant as well as the PIAA. At New Covenant, a student athlete will be eligible for participation on an athletic team if he or she meets school enrollment requirements and meets the academic and attendance standards of New Covenant and the PIAA. Students must be enrolled in six (6) credits and pass four (4) to be considered full-time and eligible to participate.

Academic Requirements

Extracurricular activities are an important part of school life; however, we feel that academics and attitude outweigh them. At New Covenant, each marking period will begin with a two-week “grace period” during which students must maintain a “C” average to be eligible to play sports. After the “grace period”, the student will be academically ineligible to participate in athletics after a season begins if he or she does not maintain a ‘C’ average with **NO ‘F’s** in **any** core classes or receives four detentions within a quarter. Grades and detentions will be checked on a weekly basis on Mondays. Students with special needs will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Each student athlete should be aware of the impact that his or her ineligibility has on the entire team and coaching staff. If any athlete misses **more than three weeks** of practice or games due to ineligibility, the athlete will be dismissed from his or her team.

Discipline:

1. Parents will be notified via email from the Athletic Director through the office.
2. Student will receive a suspension from all practices that same week (Monday through Saturday). The student athlete must return home immediately after school each day during the week of ineligibility and may not attend practices. The student is expected to spend the time after school at home studying. The expectation is to bring grades up to passing – ‘C’ average. Athletes also may not sit on the bench with their team for any of the games during that week.
3. If there are games scheduled for the week of ineligibility, the student must **dress to in-school, game-day dress code** but may not dress in team uniform. The student athlete is expected to sit on the sideline and show support for his or her teammates.
4. Exceptions will be reviewed by administration and the Athletic Director.

Detention: Detentions shall be served on the date scheduled. Rescheduling is at the discretion of administration.

School Attendance Requirements for Athletic Eligibility

- A student who is not in school due to an excused absence must have prior permission from the Athletic Director to attend or participate in their practice or game that day.
- A student must arrive to school by 11am with an excused late note (as per school policy as stated in the Parent-Student Handbook, page 7, III. ATTENDANCE, B. Tardiness) to be eligible to participate in the practice or game that day.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day and is unable to attend classes, he or she may not participate in the game or match that day. Students may not spend more than two periods in the health room during the day of a game, or they will be declared unfit to participate.
- These attendance requirements for eligibility apply to student athletes and other students who provide team support (clock operators, game managers, etc.)

Soccer Athlete Building Rule

Cleats must be removed before entering the building. Cleats are not to be worn in any part of the building at any time.

Transportation

ALL Student Athletes are expected to use the school-provided transportation to and from games unless other

transportation arrangements are approved by the Athletic Director in the days prior to the event. Team coaches may NOT grant permission to student athletes who wish to ride with parents or other students.

After School Supervision - Athletes must be with an approved adult during the time between the end of school and the start of practice or bus departure. In exceptional circumstances and with written approval from parents and administration, there may be exceptions. Please seek approval from the Athletic Director regarding all exceptions and alternate plans.

Weight Room Use

- Students may use the weight room only when supervised by an adult who can give correct weight training consultation. This ensures that proper safety measures are being employed during all training sessions, that equipment is receiving proper care, and so proficient coaching techniques are used to prevent injury and bring the greatest benefit to the athletes who use the weight equipment.
- A permission form must be completed by a parent or guardian.
- Shirt and shoes must be worn in the weight room at all times. No tank tops or short shorts may be worn.
- Lifters must work with a partner.

III. GENERAL PIAA ELIGIBILITY RULES **

**** NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HAS THE RIGHT TO HOLD STUDENTS TO A HIGHER STANDARD.**

A student who participates in interscholastic athletics at a school which is a member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (“PIAA”) must adhere to PIAA eligibility rules for student-athletes. If the student fails to comply with PIAA rules, he/she will lose their eligibility to represent New Covenant in interscholastic athletics. If he/she participates while ineligible, New Covenant and/or the team will be penalized. It is, therefore, important for the student to be aware of the requirements to which he/she is subject.

The information contained herein highlights and summarizes the major eligibility requirements he/she must meet in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. It does not list every rule or every detail. Unless otherwise indicated, each requirement applies to grades 7 through 12, inclusive.

The Principal of New Covenant is responsible for certifying the eligibility of all students representing your school in interscholastic athletics. If the student has any questions concerning their athletic eligibility, either present or future, they should discuss the matter with the school Principal or Athletic Director. The Principal or Athletic Director may also obtain from the appropriate PIAA District Committee a formal ruling as to the student’s athletic eligibility. A complete copy of the PIAA eligibility rules may be viewed on the PIAA web site at www.piaa.org, or may be obtained from the Principal or Athletic Director.

Age

To be eligible for a school year, the student must not have reached their 19th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year (15th birthday where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 and 8; 16th birthday where limited to grades 7 through 9).

Amateur Status and Awards

To be eligible to participate in a sport, the student must be an amateur in that sport. Amateur status, and eligibility, is lost if the student, their parent or guardian, receive money or property for or related to the student's athletic ability, performance, participation, services, or training in a sport.

The student may receive awards only from New Covenant, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media, or a non-profit service organization approved by the school Principal. Permissible awards include a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, shorts, jersey, cap, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque, or similar trophy, which must bear appropriate organizational insignia or comparable identification.

Attendance

1. The student must be enrolled in and in full-time attendance at a PIAA member school, or be home-schooled.
2. Generally, the student is eligible only at the school where he/she is enrolled or, if a home-schooled student, at a public school in the public school district in which the student resides.
3. If the student is absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days, the student will lose their eligibility until they have been in attendance for a total of 45 school days following their 20th day of absence.

Consent of Parent or Guardian

The student is eligible only if there is on file with the Principal of the school, before he/she begins practice, an official PIAA certificate signed by the parent or guardian consenting to the student's participation in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and/or contests in the particular sport involved.

Pre-participation Physical Evaluation

The student is eligible only if they have completed a pre-participation physical evaluation performed by an Authorized Medical Examiner (as that term is defined in the GLOSSARY of the PIAA By-Laws) before their first sport season's (cont.)

**** NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HAS THE RIGHT TO HOLD STUDENTS TO A HIGHER STANDARD.**

III. GENERAL PIAA ELIGIBILITY RULES ** (continued)

(continued from page 7) first practice of that school year. Depending on the type of initial evaluation conducted, he/she may be required to be re-evaluated or re-certified that their physical condition is satisfactory. Check with the Principal or Athletic Director to determine what re-evaluation or re-certification is needed.

In all cases, an Authorized Medical Examiner must certify, on an appropriate PIAA form, as to the student's physical fitness to participate.

Transfers

The student is treated as having transferred whenever they change schools, even if they are promoted to a higher level school or are out of school to another, either in whole or in part, for any athletic purpose they will lose their athletic eligibility in each sport in which they participate within a period of one year immediately preceding the date on which they transferred. This requirement applies even if they would otherwise be eligible at the school to which they transferred.

Period of Time after Eighth Grade, Participation, and Grade Repetition

1. The student's athletic eligibility extends only until they have reached the end of their fourth consecutive year beyond the eighth grade. Therefore, if they repeat a grade after eighth, they will be ineligible as a senior.
2. Additionally, the student may participate in (a) a maximum of six seasons in each sport during grades seven through twelve, (b) a maximum of four seasons in each sport during grades nine through twelve, and (c) a maximum of three seasons in each sport during grades seven through nine.
3. The student may participate in only one season in each sport during each school year.

Outside Participation

If the student participates as an individual or a member of a team in a non-school athletic program, while enrolled at a school which has a team in that sport, he/she will be eligible for District and Inter-District Championship Contests in that sport only if they are in uniform and available to participate as a member of their school team for at least 75 percent of its Regular Season Contests.

Academic and Curricular Requirements

1. The student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the Principal as a full-time curriculum, six (6) credits.
2. The student must be passing at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent as of each Friday during a grading period. If the student fails to meet this requirement, he/she will lose their eligibility from the following Sunday through the Saturday immediately following the next Friday as of which they meet this requirement.
3. The student must have passed at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent during the previous grading period, except that eligibility for the first grading period is based on the student's final grades for the preceding school year. If the student fails to meet this requirement, they will lose their eligibility for at least 10 or 15 school days of the next grading period, beginning on the first day report cards are issued. If their school has four grading periods, they will be ineligible for at least 15 school days; if their school has six grading periods, they will be ineligible for at least ten (10) school days.

All-Star Contests

The student will lose their eligibility in a sport for one year if they participate in an all-star contest in that sport.

Out-of-Season Participation

All PIAA sports have a defined season. If a team conducts practice and/or participates in Inter-School Practices, scrimmages, and/or contests outside that PIAA defined season, the school will be penalized.

Anabolic Steroids

The use of any form of anabolic steroids by students is prohibited.

**** NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HAS THE RIGHT TO HOLD STUDENTS TO A HIGHER STANDARD.**

New Covenant Christian School

Please sign and return this page to the school office.

ATHLETE Handbook Acknowledgement Form

We have received and read the 2013-2014 New Covenant Christian School ATHLETE Handbook. We agree to abide by the statements and policies as presented within this handbook.

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

Signature required for each athlete involved in sports at New Covenant:

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____